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Revolutions have since destroyed the herds, and the town now has only a small local trade in sugar and rum.

All goods are transported on mule-back over bad trails. Main trails run to Yajalon, San Cristóbal las Casas, and Comitan. Minor trails connect with Tenosique in Tabasco, a ride of five or six days through uninhabited forests. Other small trails lead into the heart of the forests along the Usumacinta river, where there are a few mahogany camps, fourteen days distance on a good mule.

The Spanish Conquerors had quickly discovered the richness of the soil and taken possession of it. Therefore, we find but a few Indians around Ocosingo, save at the small town of Sivacá, entirely inhabited by Tzeltal-speaking Indians. From there we secured our labourers, who were summoned by the municipal president and worked for us at the regulation pay of 50 centavos per day. Ocosingo holds sway over the native towns of Sivacá, Tenango, Oschuc, San Martin, and Bachajon. The municipality commands the Indians for all kinds of work, and in many ways lives on what can be pressed from them. As a consequence, the good people of Ocosingo are anything but popular among the Indians, though it appears that the man then in charge, Señor Simon Leon, was quite friendly towards them, and therefore well liked.

Geologically, the Ocosingo Valley is a syncline, the valley bottom and the interior mountain ranges being of a coarse red sandstone, and the exterior ranges of limestone. The axis of the valley runs approximately N-80-W to S-80-E, and Ocosingo town is located at an altitude of 900 meters above sea level.

As we rode into the village, La Farge discovered a stone block, carved with hieroglyphs, set in the pavement of the sidewalk, an excellent reception for archaeologists.

Our first concern was to find quarters, which we located in a house on the corner of a street leading into the Plaza. Soon our equipment was unloaded, and while we unpacked, the Ladino guide we had acquired in Bachajon went to his house to order food for us.

The restaurant and meal were a surprise, though not pleasant. In a room with a rotten board floor, the plaster falling off the walls, and a huge box full of saints, we were served fried eggs and black beans by an old woman with a large goitre. Though nothing in the house appeared to be either particularly exclusive or clean, the Ladino family seemed to resent that we sat down at the table with our chief guide, the trusty old Indian, Lázaro, now called "Tata" by us.

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Bachajon
Tenango
Sivaca



342 The thatching was done by one man on the roof and another, who stood on a slanting stick tied to one of the center uprights, to help the first pass the liana around.

The angle of the long side not being steep enough, the roof leaked. Two men held the eaves-pole on their shoulders while the rest drove the corner posts in deeper, thus making the angle sharper and improving the shed.

[356] Repairs in thatch are made by laying new bundles of leaves directly over the old, the stems being stitched into the thatch with a liana, and a wooden needle made on the spot.

343 In all the larger settlements sweat-baths, *pus*, are located (figs. 295-296). The essential element is a cube of wattle thickly plastered

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FIG. 295—Tenango, Chis. Sweat House of same type used in Ocosingo Valley.

with mud, about a meter to a meter and a half in all measurements, with a small doorway in one end. The door is of the same construction, or of boards. At Sivacá there were thatched roofs above the baths, but entirely separate from them. Water poured on hot stones is used in them. The purpose appears to be medicinal rather than ceremonial.

323 All the Highland Indians make vessels of clay, with the possible exception of the Tenejapeños. Among the Bachajon and at Sivacá, the art is not very well developed, only the most common forms being made, without decoration. Their clay, *tcavek lum*, ("bees-wax earth"), is found in the banks of many small streams. It is a

[135]